

via paciis

The voice of the Des Moines Catholic Worker community

APRIL 2017

WWW.DMCATHOLICWORKER.ORG

VOLUME 41, NO.1

Uncomfortable

By Jessica Reznicek

Uncomfortable. We've got to get uncomfortable. Discomfort births growth in human development. It provides the insight and clarity necessary to become the individuals we are meant to be. Overcoming challenges and fears gives us the strength to fight with love for justice. One of the problems I see among U.S. citizens today is that we are not too often forced into any situation of significant discomfort. Most of us can barely even bring ourselves to be human ... to sweat, to shiver, be hungry, to cry, or to even feel at all. You name it, we seem to have mastered a way to avoid it. And so now here we are, suffocating inside this smoldering garbage heap we've all helped build, going to barely any length to clean it up, and to nearly any length pretend it's not happening.

I began to really see the U.S. government for what it is, an oppressive regime, when I was about 12 years old. I spent most of my young adult years just angry, screaming at every front-page newspaper article I read, but too oppressed by institutions to really act ... education, workforce, debt. Admittedly, today I'm still screaming quite a bit, and while I believe passionately spoken words can send a powerful message, I've learned that actions truly do speak louder than words. The empire isn't listening anyway, and these bloodthirsty, lying, greedy, fascist, violent oppressors are truly not going stop until they have extracted, exploited and then killed every single living thing on this planet. Unless we stop them.

My fight for justice has been a slow and agonizing journey. Early on in life, I was called a liberal, and then a radical; these days, if you ask the state of Israel, I'm a terrorist. Well, call it what you want, my journey has simply been about becoming more human. Learning how to be peaceful while creating a life I where I can live in noncooperation with the State I am working to dismantle.

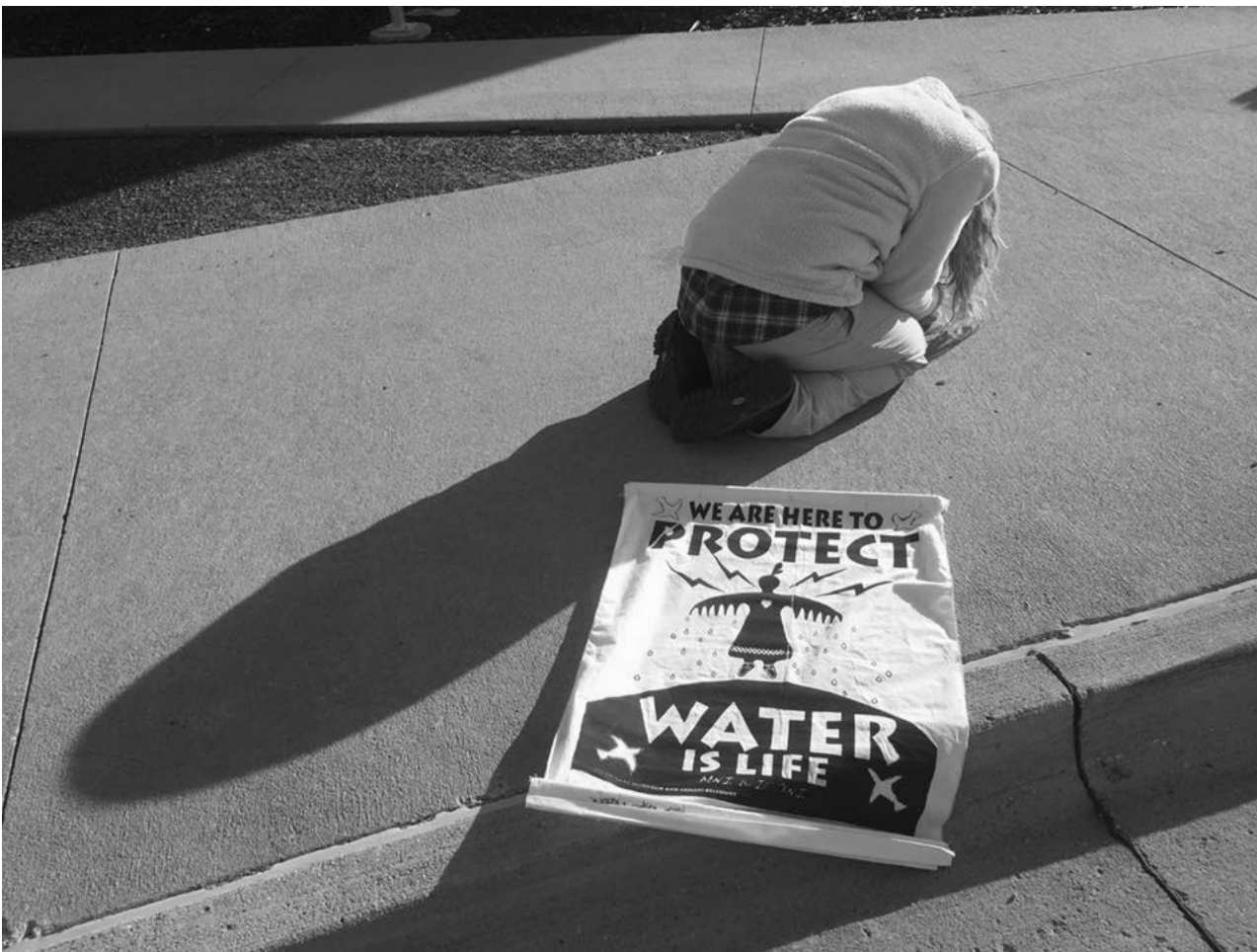
An essential piece of my process in becoming more human is stepping mindfully out of my comfort zone. Because it is in these moments that healing occurs, and each fear I overcome leaves me a little less broken and a little more whole. Liberated. Real. And from the first moment I felt something real, I never wanted to know anything else. I realized that real isn't pretty. It's usually bruised, bloody, broke, malnourished and tear-stained. No, it isn't pretty ... it is beautiful.



Jessica Reznicek breaking a window at Northrop Grumman in Bellevue, NE on Dec. 27, 2015.

Beauty and truth must be protected and restored. We must allow ourselves to grieve so much of that which they have

already taken, and then get together, make a plan and take it back. I refuse to watch the earth and all of her inhabitants be crushed and destroyed. We must place our hands on the sacred pulse of life and allow her rhythm to guide us to action. When we do this Mother Earth tells us that death and destruction is near and that the time to act is now.



Jess praying on sidewalk outside the Iowa Utilities Board building during her Dec. 2016 fast against the Dakota Access pipeline.

Property destruction, or as I prefer to call it, property improvement, is the only solution I foresee. Everything else we've tried just isn't cutting it. Over the past several years I've attended hundreds of organizing meetings. I've petitioned, and written letters. I've barricaded roads, stood face to face with police lines, military lines, and riot cop lines. I've faced lines of live ammunition, rubber bullets, tear gas, pepper spray. I've seen hundreds of innocent people shot during peaceful protest. I've been detained in military prisons and deported from a country for planting olive trees in the West Bank. I've fasted, done line-crossings, sit-ins, die-ins, and of course, marched endlessly to ... where? ... for what? I'm not so certain anymore. These tactics, while still meaningful and empowering in many ways, simply are not dismantling the infrastructure in which evil institutions operate from.

I sit in circle after circle of to activists beating their heads against walls trying to decide what tactics to implement to effectively "shut it down." We are failing to recognize property improvement as a legitimate, necessary approach we all need to be moving toward if we all truly want to shut it down. To shut it down most certainly is what we all want, but we all need to consider what an endeavor like this really demands. We struggle when we try to envision what the "shutting it down" process will actually look like. Why? Because we've never actually done it. And because it makes us feel uncomfortable. But lately I've been trying to imagine ...

Property improvement I believe without a doubt will shut this corrupt system down. It is action laden with risk, sacrifice, and great discomfort. It is the tradition of the Catholic Worker movement, as well as in the spirit of Jesus. We are all

feeling that urgency, and we're feeling it for a reason. What we've been doing just isn't shutting it down. We need to focus on dismantling this blood-sucking beast that is killing everything we love and honor. We all need to stand up together and begin the dismantling process, one piece at a time. In the spirit of love, compassion and nonviolence. Targeted and

disciplined action, not random and without reason.

I've been feeling and acting increasingly from a spiritual place of obligation to act, these days guided by faith alone. I look to the Spirit for guidance and to Jesus as my role model. He was the one who overturned the moneychangers in the Temple. Why? Because he saw evil and refused to accept it. We all feel the evil around us, and it's time to become a little more like the guy who showed us how to handle it. Jesus cared, and when I read scripture I can feel his passion. I want to also unleash that righteous rage and say NO! And if that means I have to look the beast in the eye and tell him to step aside, I'm ready. Oh, and Pontius Pilate, you're fired, too.

Before I wrap up this article, I want to get real. People are dying, and we're signing the checks. Blood is pouring through streets all over the world. Children, women and men all over the planet are dying. The Earth is dying. And the reality is that these things are happening, and will continue to happen because we are failing to do our job. I believe the days of marching past the infrastructure whose business specializes in killing everything and everyone who stands in its way of a dollar are over. It is time to dismantle the White House! And then on to our Statehouses and then to the oil refineries, and then to Monsanto. Tear it all down and rebuild a world of beauty. Let's work through our fears and discomfort and understand what we have been called here in this life to do is something real. Let's shut it all down. With love. With integrity. With a steady, peaceful hand the world can trust.

It's time for us all get a little more uncomfortable.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

via pacis is published quarterly. How to subscribe: mail, email, or phone your name and address to the editor.

THE DES MOINES CATHOLIC WORKER COMMUNITY

The Des Moines Catholic Worker Community, founded in 1976, is a response to the Gospel call to compassionate action as summarized by the Catholic Worker tradition.

We are committed to a simple, nonviolent lifestyle as we live and work among the poor. We directly serve others by opening the Dingman House as a drop-in center for those in need of food, clothing, toiletries, use of a phone, toilet, shower, or just a cup of coffee and conversation. We also engage in activities that advocate social justice.

BECOMING A DES MOINES CATHOLIC WORKER

We are open to new community members. For information about joining our mission, contact any community member or visit our website: www.dmcatholicworker.org.

MAILING ADDRESS

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BISHOP DINGMAN HOUSE

(Drop-in Center and Business Phone)
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Des Moines, IA 50314
515-243-0765
Residents: Gilbert Landolt, Joe Mounsey, Aaron Jones, Sarah Dyer

PHIL BERRIGAN HOUSE

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515-282-4781
frank.cordaro@gmail.com
Residents: Frank Cordaro, Bob Cook, Jessica Reznicek, Ruby Montoya

RACHEL CORRIE HOUSE

1301 8th St.
Des Moines, IA 50314
515-330-2172
Residents: Julie Brown, Aaron Jorgensen-Briggs, Patrick Stall,

CHELSEA MANNING HOUSE

1317 8th St.
Des Moines, IA 50314
515-777-2180
Residents: Norman Searah, Ed Bloomer, Colyn Burbank, Hilary Burbank, Al Burney, Annie Patton

BOB COOK HOUSE FOR PRISON ABOLITION

1433 9th St.
Des Moines, IA 50314
515-777-2180
Residents: Jack Petsche, Ruth Cole, Darius Davenport

WEEKLY COMMUNITY LITURGY

Wednesdays, 3:00 p.m. Berrigan House.
All are welcome. Call to confirm.

MONTHLY VETERANS FOR PEACE MEETING

Berrigan House. For more information, contact Gil Landolt at peacevet@hotmail.com or call 515-333-2180.

WEEKLY AA MEETING

Fridays, 5:00 pm, Berrigan House

THE CHIAPAS PROJECT

Chiapas, Mexico
Richard Flamer
flamerrichard@hotmail.com



As for ourselves, we must be meek, bear injustice, malice, and rash judgment. We must turn the other cheek, give up our cloak, go a second mile.
-Dorothy Day

TWO POEMS *by Jimmie L. Lewis*

Peace and Non-Violence

First of all let's start this
off with prayer, and a moment
of silence
and for all the things
that is going on.
The message that's been
spoken about "Hello"
Peace, and Non-Violence

Dear Heavenly father
we ask in your son
which is our Lord and
savior Jesus name
for each and everyone
take a second, or moment, or hour
put aside the fun, jokes, and games
bow your heads, raise your hands up high
you don't have to listen, or
even ask the question Why?
when it's all said and done
but you better keep
listening to the word of God
who sits up high, with the star
that shine on us
no matter how near
or extremely how far

God is with you all the time
just like a car window unwind
so make sure you see the light,
don't be spiritually blind

The love God gives you
with protection
he allow his angels to
handle that
so six feet under the opinions
and learn the knowledge
to grow the facts.

So always keep it real
with the real love God gives
"Sssshh" quiet, once again a moment
of silence
throw up the sign
of Peace, and Non-Violence

If It's God's Will (part 3)

Thank God for another day
he allowed you to
wake up to.
If you have not
done yet this second
drop to your knees
and ask the Lord
that this day He'll bless
you to make it through

Blessed you are
because all the other
days in the past is
behind you

You will make
another day only if God
allows you to

For right now live this day
and do what God has planned for you.
You made it this far
because it's something that's
called a "calling"
for you to do
that is the reason
God created you

Understand and believe God
bless you to be spoken to
if you've made it through
this day

Because it's God's will
not yours
understand tomorrow is
not promised to you

Keep your faith strong
that you will make it
through to see another day
understand this message
is for real
it's been already said and done
before and still saying
if it's God's will
you will. Amen.



Visit the DMCW Web Page

<http://dmcatholicworker.org>

See on home page: DMCW's statement in support of women's ordination and DMCW Julie Brown's featured Des Moines Register article "Julie Brown finds her tribe." Visit the Berrigan page and find links to the three e-mail listservs that Frank and Berrigan House maintain. Go to the Rachel Corrie page for updates on the Rachel Corrie Project. You will also find a page for our newsletter with issues for at least five years back with hopes of getting a complete digital copy of all the VPs.'as time, \$\$\$ and expertise makes itself known. There is a page on how to help and one on our community, still in development . . . The person behind our web page effort is Aaron Jorgensen-Briggs. Aaron is also responsible for our Occupy the World Food Prize campaign web page, which is linked on the Berrigan page. Aaron welcomes feedback.

Contact him at flotson@gmail.com and check out his blog, <http://flotson.net>

Interview with Reverend Billy

By Aaron Jorgensen-Briggs

So I thought we would start with the Occupy the World Food Prize action that you recently participated in in Des Moines and I'd just like to ask you for your perspective on that action. How did you get connected with OWFP and what moved you to take the time to come all the way to Des Moines to be a part of that?

In some sense, I am an Iowan. My namesake, William Talen, my great-grandfather, and my daughter's namesake, Lena Talen, my great-grandmother, Lena's great-great-grandmother, these are my father's grandparents, they met in Sioux Center and farmed near Pella, and they were, you know, Dutch Calvinists. When you hear the phrase Sioux Center, Pella ... that's what they were. And that's what I descended from, the Dutch Calvinist tradition. The Dutch Reformed people like Rick Santorum and Ted Cruz try to enlist every time there's an Iowa primary. So, the World Food Prize isn't so far for me to go, culturally. Grew up in the Midwest, and my family lived at various points in their lives in Iowa. They also lived in Wisconsin, South Dakota and Minnesota. So it's easy for me to feel upset when I read the cancer rates in Iowa are soaring and when I have done so much research into Monsanto's herbicides and insecticides and the regime of poisons with these companies that genetically engineer crops. It's easy for me to think of those farm families, think of their children.

A couple other things come up for me thinking about that particular action in the fall ... So, one of the things that happened was you and Frank Cordaro from the Catholic Worker and Rick Prettyman did an act of civil disobedience and you were arrested, spent the night in the county jail ... and I guess I'd just like to ask you in general about your perspective on civil disobedience. How do you feel about that, how would you describe the motivation that led you to make the choice to risk being arrested as part of this effort?

You know, an activist looks out at the world and has an intuition about where to place her or his body and where to raise her or his voice. What you've got in Iowa is a ... company state. You've heard the phrase company town? Disney and L.A. A company town. Monsanto and its partners in the world of Big GM as we call them – Cargill, Dow, DuPont, Bayer – the people advertising when you get off the jet in the Des Moines airport. You know, DuPont has a big billboard there, the crop science gang who are corporatizing our food supply ... this is something where my intuition tells me “I've got to be there.” And I have my emotions about Iowa. In some deep sense I'm from there. But also I've been working on issues involving chemical companies with our group the Church of Stop Shopping for a number of years. Just the year before we had opened for Neal Young on his anti-Monsanto tour singing our “Monsanto is the Devil” medley but before that we've been defending honey bees, which is very much about Bayer and Monsanto (now becoming one company, I'm sure with Donald Trump's help, they've already met with him) ... So, the Church of Stop Shopping has been involved in the earth's crisis going back to 2005 to Katrina and Rita, “Hurricane Fall,” when we made the shift from our work as resisters of Wal-Mart and big retail and really it's not much of a shift ... going from Wal-Mart to a poisonous acre of corn in Iowa, it's a ten foot walk from the edge of the Wal-Mart property to that cornfield, and they are of a piece. They are both enemies of the earth, they're both primary causes of climate change, habitat destruction, species extinction. It breaks my heart that Iowa has lost so much of its wildlife. The silence in the countryside is just a real tragedy and it's ultimately dangerous to human beings. So I've been in this, this has been our effort for some time.

So why civil disobedience? And would you recommend it? What would you say to people maybe reading this interview in our newspaper and asking themselves the question, you know, what should I do, is civil disobedience maybe something I myself should think about? What would you want to say to people who are interested in these possibilities?

Civil disobedience is very much of the moment. It's very difficult to be involved in electoral politics at this moment for obvious reasons. Certainly both political parties support industrial toxic agriculture, but civil disobedience goes to human beings of both political parties and beyond. I was proud to be involved with Father Frank and Brother Rick

and the consortium of groups there, the coalition of groups on that day, last October, they also understand the importance of civil disobedience and I was honored to be invited by them, to join them, and I came up from New York and sure enough, our intuition that we should just press a little bit against the World Food Prize, no violence, nothing like that, just refuse to leave this one spot. It was a public sidewalk. We were supposed to not be there, 350 feet away from their party. We refused to leave, they said assume the position, and we got handcuffed and taken off to Polk County jail. So, our intuition proved to be correct, because in the trial they showed their true colors. They tried to suspend the United States Constitution in the trial. They tried to suspend the Bill of Rights. They made a motion to the judge that the Bill of Rights should be suspended. And this of course is something that went out around the world. The prosecutors in Des Moines are, everybody knows, under pressure from Monsanto to do something about these protestors and in trying to defend their monopoly on Iowa agriculture, their cash cow they've got going with their toxic farming, in defending that against a small group of people hundreds of feet away from their party, they completely showed who they are and Iowa people are talking about this and they know what happened. The DA's office proposed that the First Amendment be suspended in that trial, that Father Frank and I could not use the phrase “freedom of expression” during the course of that trial. This isn't right wing, this isn't Fox News, this is Franco. This is the dictatorship of the one percent. This is not



even on the map. Suspending the United States Constitution? What is that? That predates 1776. That is not our country. So, although there is some press censorship on Monsanto's past in Iowa certainly that we experienced, the word is getting around. It's a scandal. It's a scandal. And it leaves you with this question. Industrial agriculture with its genetic engineering, with its herbicides and its insecticides, is not usually thought of as an opponent of freedom, but it is. But it is. You can't help but ask that question, from their conduct in that trial, you cannot help but ask that question. Now I'm talking on and on here Aaron, you're gonna have some editing to do. Well, the punch line of that two pages of talking that you just got from me, the punch line is you're left looking at industrial agriculture with its toxins and its genetic engineering, you're left thinking, oh, those corporations oppose freedom of speech. You're left with that conclusion. Or at least you're left with that question.

Let me touch on a couple of other points that I think are important. Another thing that was interesting to me about the action this fall was that the protest was connecting the World Food Prize and the fight to oppose industrial agriculture with the fight against the Dakota Access/Bakken pipeline and the big oil economy generally. I wonder if you could say a few words about how you view those connections?

Well, we have to self educate and develop new language in which these are no longer separate issues. The oil-based industrial agriculture economy is all of a piece with the infrastructure that conveys the tar sands and fracking crude. You know, we've been to Standing Rock and we've been to the World Food Prize, you know the Stop Shopping Choir is coming this fall back to the World Food Prize. So we see the connection. Yes, it's a connection and a lot of that needs to be new kinds of words. I thought that Father Frank gave a wonderful talk before his arrest making that connection very clear. The Earth has got to be in charge again. The Earth IS in charge, there's no doubt about that. The Earth is in charge. We receive our instructions from the Earth. The Earth is where our food comes from, not some tortured mediation of what the Earth offers. Monsanto wants to improve on the Earth. Better to be with the Earth and organically develop what might benefit humankind but in so doing also leave other species with their habitats. So, the Earth is the boss and you start from there. When you say the Earth is the boss, the Earth is something that unites us all, the Earth is common to all of us, we're made of nothing but the Earth. It is the Earth inside of us that is our conscience. Then you look out from

the Earth, from the position of the Earth, and you look out, well, you know, the pipeline and the crop dusters are the same thing.

I have two other questions that I think might relate to each other and you're starting to touch on some of those things. I've heard you speak before quite a few times, so I'm aware, and in your comments so far in this interview there is what I might call ... for you there is a spiritual dimension to political activism, we could say, which you've been talking about. You always talk about that. It's sort of at the center and at the heart of your message always, but I wondered if there was anything more you wanted to say about that, and it connects with another question I had which is just along the lines of ... this is a very dangerous time in our country politically and in the world, and so I wondered if you might have any advice to offer to activists and to anyone who is feeling anxiety, fear, despair, whatever, in relation to just this onslaught of political attacks against people and the Earth and everything good – basically that's what it feels like to me – we're just under attack all the time right now. Does that make sense?

Yes, it's one question. The way to deal with Trumpism IS the Earth life that's inside you, and developing that, that's the thing that I do that makes me feel closest to Dorothy Day. You know I can't personally be a member of the Catholic Church or the Dutch Reform Church of my parents, but I pray to the Earth, which is to say I pray to life. I'd rather proceed in a non-doctrinal kind of theology. The Earth doesn't send up specific beliefs, you don't have to deal with translating a verse in Leviticus, but the Earth is what we all have, regardless of our belief. And something like close to 40 percent of the United States' citizens now tell pollsters that they're not affiliated with a particular denomination anymore. The biggest church in the United States now is the “none of the above” and what none of the above is is the Earth. I've talked to many of these people, and these are people that come to our performances of the Stop Shopping Choir and Reverend Billy in New York City. We basically have people who are non-committal, non-doctrinal, they don't want a judgmental white male god ... those are our people, and they're all over the place. And they're making their own spiritual life. It's a DIY spiritual life, making it out of the arts and sex and nature walks and raising a child ... a lot of people, their main church right now is raising life in their home, a child ... or three. So, you know, I love Father Frank and I very much appreciate his dance that he's doing with an intensely conservative tradition, but he's found his way to Daniel Berrigan and Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day, he's found his way to the people who adhere to a loving peaceful tradition within the Catholic Church. I think of Rabbi Michael Lerner, dealing with Judaism in much the same kind of tradition, and so I applaud these people. I myself won't be a member of the Dutch Reform Church and try to be a peaceful presence inside that entity, I've moved away from it, but we have a large number of people in our church, we have people who have lapsed from every religion in our ... we're the church of lapsed believers. We believe in the god of people who don't believe in god. And that's an adventure, because you're not accepting the structure of an old religion, and you're not accepting the structure of people who successfully resisted those old structures, we just get together and we say Changeallujah! Changeallujah! ... It's dynamic. Let's figure this out together, we're on the move, we're full of blood and plasma here, come on, here we go! So we find life coming to us in the duende of performance and our favorite performance is inside corporate space. So we invade Monsanto laboratories. We go into bank lobbies and we sing until after we're told to leave. We sing until we're done with the song and if they take us to jail that's their business. But we go into what we call contested space, and in that effort at expressed justice ... I was just in Citibank this afternoon, and Citibank was the bank that brought together the 17 banks that financed the Dakota Access Pipeline, and I was there helping a friend deposit money for her business, she didn't have the right ID and I did so I helped her do that, and there I was two weeks ago, in one of those 17 banks that Citibank invited to the table that put in 500 million dollars, and that's Wells Fargo. We were in Wells Fargo, and I went into that bank with a fish that started demonstrating to me that it was alive during the action. During the action the fish came to life. We thought we had purchased this fish that had met its demise, but then it was alive and we cut the action short and got into a cab and rushed to the East River and threw it in the East River and it swam away. That was Earth life. That was Earth life coming into us at the point that we were violating the Wells Fargo lobby. I was down on my back clutching a big 40 pound fish to my chest, and there were people standing on all sides waiting to get or give money to this criminal enterprise Wells Fargo, and that was Earth life coming up into me.

REV. BILLY, continued from pg 3

Our readers might enjoy seeing a photo of you with that great big fish. It was like a carp or something, wasn't it?

Yes, and we were mindful that it was a carp, an invasive species, not everybody's favorite, like a rat to some people. But I remember carp from the streams of the Dakotas when I lived up there and so it made me think of Standing Rock. You know, you can partner with carp and life, you can eat a carp, it's edible. The Standing Rock Sioux and the people who live along the Missouri River up there, they've been pushed away from their fisheries as the Army Corps of Engineers

flooded the Missouri River and created Lake Oahe, they were pushed away from the source of their food and that is basically the whole theme of the whole camp – water. They call themselves Water Protectors. We were standing there with hundreds of different indigenous peoples represented and they were all singing their own water prayers ... in other words they were singing, they were vibrating in their bodies with the shape that water takes in their homelands, so that might be the streams of New England, or it might be the ice in Finland or the tropical forests ...

And you were there?

Yes, 20 people from the Stop Shopping Choir went. We're liberation students. We went to Ferguson, we've been to Barcelona, we've been to Liverpool, we've been to Oakland, we've been to places where uprisings have taken place to study freedom fighting and I have to say that you know, during Occupy Wall Street I came to Des Moines and I spoke.

I remember.

I spoke there, and I felt the strength of the people of Des Moines and I really enjoyed being with the resisters of Des Moines and so I'm glad to study the liberation of Iowa.

Conclusive Evidence Indicts Industrial Ag

By Sharon Donovan

Seventy-five years ago the world witnessed Pearl Harbor and the start of World War II. During those dreadful years American chemical corporations produced massive amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus for TNT and other high explosives. America dropped 3.4 million tons of bombs on Germany and the Pacific region in those wars.

The year 2015 marked the 40th anniversary of the Vietnam War. Time cannot erase the horrors of that war. Haunting many of us still is the photograph of a naked and napalm-burned child running down a dirt road or, later, tiny Vietnamese babies born with devastating birth defects. During the 1960's America sprayed an estimated 13 million gallons of toxic Agent Orange to defoliate the Ho Chi Minh Trail in that small Asian country.

Years later, when those wars were over, companies such as Monsanto and Dupont had to find uses for their leftover chemicals. In the case of World War II it was nitrogen and phosphorus, in the case of the Vietnam War it was Agent Orange.

Today the ravages of war are found in our own backyards. Look no further than out your nearest window, for the battleground of 2016 is in the corn and soybean fields and on the lawns and playgrounds of Iowa. But while the enemy has changed, some of the weapons remain the same. They are nitrogen in synthetic fertilizer, excess phosphorus, and 2,4-D of past wars. This spring and fall these chemicals of war were dropped on Iowa soil and on the plants we eat, then their gases moved through the air as toxic drift. This is industrialized farming. All of humanity suffers because of it.

Industrial Farming Success is a Myth

In 1973, a new Harvard graduate by the name of Mitt Romney, working for the consulting firm Bain, developed the slogan "Feed the World" for his client Monsanto. Today the success of that slogan generates profits for corporate agribusinesses because the uninformed among us actually believe Monsanto's genetically modified (GMO) seeds are needed to feed the world. Yet GMO crops are not designed to deliver higher yields. The respected Rodale Institute's 30-year report states it clearly: "Traditional plant breeding and farming methods, not GMO seeds, have increased yields of major grain crops three to four times more than GMO varieties, despite huge investments of public and private dollars in biotech research."

Industrial Farming is Making Us Sick

After eating GMO corn, soy, sugar beets, and canola products for 20 years, all from seeds specially designed to withstand the herbicide glyphosate in Round-up, Americans have watched their health dramatically deteriorate. Today the toxic herbicide glyphosate is found in our bones, blood, cells, and breast milk. The World Health Organization (WHO) has scientific proof that glyphosate alters human DNA, and in 2015 the WHO classified it as a probable carcinogen.

Glyphosate is also a neurotoxin and endocrine disruptor. It destroys good gut bacteria and subsequently weakens our immune system. Since GMOs were introduced, allergies in the general population have increased by 400%.

Steven Druker, lawyer, Iowan, and author of *Altered Genes, Twisted Truth* (Salt Lake City: Clear River Press, 2015) says, "Genetic engineering of our food supply is the biggest fraud in the history of science."

Industrial Farming Destroys the Soil and Contaminates Our Water

Many of Iowa's drinking water sources, streams, and rivers are contaminated by high levels of harmful synthetic nitrogen fertilizer. Mixed with the GMO herbicide glyphosate, nitrites become extraordinarily toxic. Glyphosate weakens plant root and robs the soil of plant nutrients, which in turn robs us of essential nutrients in our food. The heavily increased use of herbicides in farming, encouraged by Big Ag companies, also damages soil fertility by harming beneficial

sions come directly from agriculture. Industrial farming destroys the natural capacity of plants and soils to sequester atmospheric carbon. Nitrous oxide molecules from fertilizer stay in the atmosphere on the average of 114 years, and its impact on the atmosphere is 300 times that of carbon dioxide.

Industrial Farming Kills Bees and Monarch Butterflies

Glyphosate and other neonicotinoids are the key factors in the collapse of Monarch butterflies and bee colonies. Glyphosate-spraying kills the butterfly's larvae's only food, the milkweed plant. In 2014 ten scientists from the USDA filed a petition calling on the USDA to stop ordering them to "retract studies" that farming pesticides were causing bee-endangerment, which their studies proved to be true. Just last week the for the first time ever the humble bumblebee was placed on the endangered list.

Industrial Farming has no Future

Big Ag chemical and seed companies use the word "sustainable," but what they actually sell is unsustainable agrochemical farming requiring pesticides, synthetic fertilizer, and GMO seeds. Monsanto, for example, spent \$95 million on marketing in 2013 alone. Front groups, trade associations, media, Facebook and Twitter posts, and attacks on scientists and journalists are among their many methods to control public opinion. Big Ag aims to make present-day industrial farming methods seem the new "normal." They are not normal, they are environmentally destructive and sickening to all living things.

Our Toxic Food

Elected officials have failed to promote healthier farm policies, proclaiming tiny improvements as victory. According to a newly released CDC study, people who ate the most food derived from USDA subsidized crops were the most likely to develop diabetes, heart disease, or stroke, than people who consumed the least. The National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine examined when and why people die in the U.S. and 16 other countries. Compared to people in other developed nations, Americans endure some of the worst rates of heart disease, lung disease, obesity, and diabetes, and we rated last.

In 2014 the Congressional Budget Office projected the total cost of the Farm Bill would be \$489 billion over five years. That's almost a half trillion dollars. Our tax dollars should go toward safe, ecological permaculture and organic farming methods. Farm Bill programs should make vegetables and fruits a major focus – food we all know is good for us. Jane Goodall puts it this way, "Someday we shall look back on this dark era of agriculture and shake our heads. How could we have ever believed that it was a good idea to grow our food with poisons?"

All Americans have a right to safe, nutritious food that supports good health. Industrial agriculture's time is over. Together we must demand that agricultural methods and farm policy immediately change direction for the sake of all living things on this planet.



insect species, microorganisms, and worms which naturally fight pests needed to maintain soil health.

Industrial Farming Creates Superweeds and Super Insects

More than one billion pounds of pesticides are applied to U.S. soil each year. Yet latest figures show that herbicide-resistant weeds grew on 61.2 million acres of our farmland. Today the industrial farming answer to this ever-growing problem is just to spray more often using stronger and more toxic chemicals. Who would have thought we would spray our fields – our food – with Agent Orange? The EPA just approved Dow's Enlist Duo herbicide, which combines glyphosate and Agent Orange for GMO soybeans, corn, and cotton. Vietnam vets know what happens when people are exposed to 2,4-D in Agent Orange – they get cancer, nerve damage, and other serious health issues.

Industrial Farming is a Major Contributor to Climate Change

Agrochemical farming is a major cause of climate change. It emits nearly 40% more greenhouse gases per pound of crop produced than organic systems, primarily through the use of synthetic fertilizer and fuel. Scientists now calculate that at least a quarter of all man-made greenhouse gas emis-

2017 Occupy the World Food Prize Trial

By Frank Cordaro

On January 11, in a surprise move, the Polk County Attorney's Office dropped the trespass charges on Rev. Billy and Des Moines Catholic Worker Frank Cordaro just before jury selection in our short-circuited trial. Thanks to our attorneys Wylie Stecklow and Glen Downey, the weakness of the prosecutor's case was easily laid out from the very beginning. At one point, Judge Coppola was willing to allow for a continuance of the case in order to give the prosecutor time to resubmit the charges correctly. We turned down the offer.

The deciding factor for dropping our charges came when it was brought up in court that at the bench trial (trial without jury) of Rick Prettyman the day before the same charges were dismissed because the distance between our arrest on Oct. 13 and the entrance of the actual event inside the Capitol building was well over 300 feet, more than



Wylie Stecklow, Rev. Billy, Frank Cordaro and Glen Downey celebrate victory after trial at Polk County Court House on Jan. 11, 2017.

a football field away. Rick was arrested with Rev. Billy and myself on Oct 13.

When Judge Coppola told the County Attorney that she was going to "have a problem with a football field away" from the entrance to the Capitol and the trespass arrest, the County Attorney asked for a recess to consult with her bosses. When court was resumed, the charges were officially dismissed.

Big thank yous to Wylie Stecklow and Glen Downey for great legal work! Wylie and Glen made a great team and worked well together.

We can be assured by next October at the World Food Prize event, the State Troopers and the County Attorney's Office will have "shit" together when we show up to protest.

After court, lunch and beers and just before we put Wylie and Rev. Billy on a plane returning to NYC, we talked about the next October World Food Prize and bringing Rev. Billy's whole choir for the rally and direct action at the State Capitol.

DMCW Pipeline Resistance at Governor's Office

By Frank Cordaro

On February 22, Bold IA and others organized a statewide direct action day against the Dakota Access/Bakken pipeline at sites throughout Iowa.

The Des Moines Catholic Worker formed one of the Bold Iowa "Bold Action Teams" and invited others to join us in occupying Governor Branstad's office at the Statehouse. We are asking the Governor to help us shut down the Dakota Access/Bakken pipeline through Iowa for all the good reasons, already given by thousands of Iowans, over the last couple years.

We showed up at the Governor's office at 1 p.m. We filled the waiting room space in the Governor's office and made our grievances known to the Governor's staff and the media. Then we prayed. Then we waited till the 5 p.m. "closing time."

At 5 p.m., the State Troopers arrested Des Moines Catholic Workers Ed Bloomer and Frank Cordaro, Des Moines activist Kaylynn Strain, and Donnielle Wanatee from the Meskwaki Tribe in Tama, Iowa. All four were taken to the Polk County jail. Kaylynn Strain and Donnielle Wanatee bailed out with court date pending. Ed Bloomer and Frank spent the night in jail and went to jail court in the morning, where we both plead guilty and Judge Coppola gave us time served.



DMCWers Frank Cordaro and Ed Bloomer with Donnielle Wanatee from the Meskwaki Tribe in Tama being placed in a police van after arrest in Governor Branstad's office on Feb. 22, 2017.

My 66th Birthday: But for the Grace of God

By Frank Cordaro

Lots of my friends are publicly distancing themselves from President Trump, especially the younger ones. "He is not my president," they say. Maybe so, if you're young. But for us Baby Boomers, the over 60 crowd, Donald Trump is not only a reflection of the Ugly America we have become, he is us.

But for the grace of God and a million different personal choices, consciously made, every day and every hour by Donald and me over the last 60 years, I could be the president and Donald could be a Catholic Worker.

Trump and I belong to a generation of Americans who have lived our whole lives off the ill-got gains of WWII. In our lifetime, with our consumption level of "stuff," we are witnessing the destruction of our global environment and life forces at extinction levels.

We have explicitly and implicitly handed over entitlement and privilege to property and money, so much so that we now living in a world where power and control of all our social/political/economic institutions, including all mainline Christian Churches, is in the hands of the wealthy.

This has happened because there is no check or balance to the privilege and entitlement we give to money and property. The interests of wealth control our government, media, educational and religious institutions.

Despite all our efforts for equality and advancements

in the labor and union struggles, civil rights and anti-war movements, the women's rights and now the LGBT rights movements, every human and civil rights advancement since WWII, at this point in our history, can only be measured as too little too late.

This need not be so. Donald Trump and the Ugly America

he represents do not have to be the "face" of my generation's contribution to humanity.

"More and more baby boomers begin the new year with nothing on their schedule but plans to golf, travel, and spend more time with the grandkids. The number of Americans aged 65 or older without a disability that aren't in the labor force rose by 800,000 in the fourth quarter of 2016, marking the resumption of a long-standing trend: the exodus of their generation from the work force and into retirement." Older Americans Are Retiring in Droves, by Luke Kawa, Bloomberg, Jan 6, 2017.

I turned 66 yrs old this past Feb. and this is my birthday callout to fellow retiring healthy wealthy baby boomers! Give it all away! Give it to your kids. Give it to your church, to a club, to whatever? Set yourself up with a fixed income to cover a modest, simple lifestyle below the poverty line! Live by yourself; live in a community. And spend the rest of your life doing the Works of Mercy, servicing others.

We taught our kids how to make money and get stuff. For the future, they will need to know how to live on less and live well. Give them a leg up. Show them how it can be done. Don't let Trump have the last word on who we are.



Frank's official baby picture.

DMCW Disrupts Trump Speech in Des Moines

By Frank Cordaro

On December 8, members of the Des Moines Catholic Workers and friends disrupted a Trump rally in Des Moines. Frank Cordaro, Jessica Reznicek, Patrick Stall and Sarah Dyer, from the Des Moines Catholic Worker, along with Jade Suganuma, Owen Geiken, Alex Cohen and Erich Hayes, unveiled a banner inside the venue that read "IOWA SAYS NO [swastika]" and chanted "No Trump! No KKK! No fascist USA!" The group effectively interrupted the President's speech, an event that garnered national media attention.

When the Des Moines Police Department arrived, although the protestors were immediately cooperative with police requests to exit the venue, police officers responded with violence, breaking Jade Suganuma's finger. Jade has filed a formal complaint with the DMPD that has so far gone unanswered. Her finger had to be set with a metal pin and is now permanently disfigured. Please consider contributing to the gofundme to cover Jade's medical costs:

<https://www.gofundme.com/jadesfinger>

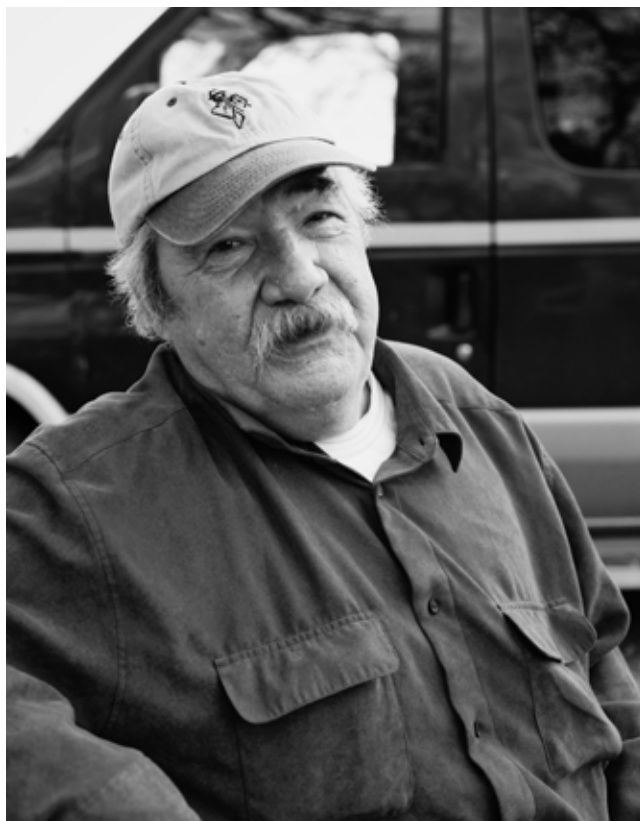
Note: our cover photograph originally ran in the *Des Moines Register* with this caption: "And like many Trump appearances, this one also had protesters – three people who unfurled a banner reading 'Iowa says no to hate' and chanting, 'No Trump, no KKK, no fascist USA.'"



DMCW Frank Cordaro's moment of fame flashed up on MSNBC's "All In With Chris Hayes," a rare Santa sighting!

Faces of the Des Moines Catholic Worker

Photos by Taylor Vander Well





Pete Leone and Charlie Punelli, a master carpenter, fixing the Dingman House dining room benches. The Dingman House benches and tables were made by Jim Harrington back in the 1980s from wood Jim reclaimed from abandoned houses in our neighborhood. Thanks to Pete and Charlie and a callout to Jim Harrington – “Presente!”



Des Moines Catholic Worker Julie Brown with Michele and Greg Obed of the Duluth Catholic Worker in Iraqi Kurdistan where Julie is now working fulltime with Christian Peacemaker Teams.



Mark Kenney, Ed Bloomer, Sr. Cynthia Hruby (Notre Dame), Fr. Tom Glennon (Columbian in Bellevue NE), Dagmar Hoxsie, Gil Landolt, Denny Davis and Michael Sprong at annual Feast of Holy Innocents vigil at STRATCOM / Offutt AFB last December.



March 10, 2017 – DM Catholic Workers and Vets for Peace members Ed Bloomer, Gill Landolt and Al Burney held a 20 minute silent vigil outside the entrance of a new IA National Guard recruiting center at the Jordan Creek “Town Center” in West Des Moines during its grand opening. Since Jordan Creek is private property, there are no free speech guarantees. The three amigos left peacefully, their point not lost on the many national guard members who saw them kicked out of the mall.

Barb Hans R.I.P.

By Frank Cordaro

The DMCW lost one of our oldest and dearest friends, supporters and fellow activists with the death of Barb Hans this past November 25th at the age of 75.

I first met Barb when she and her husband Gil were active in the early years of Bishop Dingman. They were on a board Bishop Dingman appointed of lay people, priests and sisters, who helped form the Catholic Peace Ministry (CPM) and hire Sr. Gwen Hennessey, the first CPM director. Back then, we were in our early years at the DMCW and I was a layperson too, appointed by Bishop Dingman to be on the board as well.

Those were great years to be a Catholic in Des Moines and Barb and Gil were part of it all. The two showed up at all the local demonstrations and even a few of the out-of-town ones, like Offutt AFB when it was just the Strategic Air Command. In the early years they were inseparable, passionate and clearly in love.

I also remember Barb's deeply felt grief when Gil died in January 2006, unexpectedly and left her alone. Barb continued to be a member of the CPM board until well into the 2000's. She loved serving at the Bishop Dingman Peace Awards banquets. She's been one of our monthly donors for so long, I can't remember when she started! And she continued to join us at our demonstrations and protests! Barb and I also shared in the struggle to seek justice in the Catholic Church for women, especially with the Des Moines chapter of Call To Action back in the 1990s. Barb was not afraid to join our demonstrations at the Cathedral either.

These last years, she had slowed down her active life and spent her time and energy with family, which was time well spent. She became a master gardener, purchased a home in Colorado, traveled abroad and spent time with many of her friends. She will be missed by them the most. She will be missed by us, too.



Barb and Gil Hans at weekly peace vigil in Des Moines in 2005.

Norman's Whereabouts

By Norman Searah

Hello there! Welcome to the Chelsea Manning House, or, if you may, 1317 8th St. Sometime I had to move here where I could live here on one floor, so I took the back room that was a porch some time ago. I get around good. I often don't have to use a cane in the house. I like to sit at the table near the front door. We do a lot of things at the table besides eat there. We greet people coming through the door and we play table games.

Hilary sometimes brings children who often play with Jayne's son who both live in the house. All the children bring joy to the house. Jayne's son likes to play with Mama Cat and sometimes with Al who lives on the same floor with Annie and me. We also have pizza parties when Sheri Clemons comes to Des Moines to see her father and Tom. It is a joy to see her. I often recall visiting the Catholic Worker in New York City, both houses and her. I used to see Carmen T. and Joanne K. who were staff people here at the Des Moines Catholic Worker.

There is a piano next to the table. Aaron will come over to play it, also Bryan who lives upstairs. Sometimes others will try to play the piano. Ed Bloomer who lives upstairs takes good care of Mama Cat and does my clothes and is a friend who takes care of a lady that was a guest of the Worker House. I often hear music coming from upstairs and know that Colyn and Hilary live upstairs and they must be making music.

I thank Joe who cooks over at Dingman House sending some food over so I have something to eat. To Aaron Jones, thanks for putting a Christmas tree up so when I looked out my window I could see it. I recall that it was once my room and it looked nice. To Frank, I can't wait for spring to get back and going back to church.

I still do some work on Katy's wood carving. Katy is Bryan's friend. I got to do one for Chelsea Manning House. I might go to the Woodsmith Store for bass wood and other things. I do wood carving, mostly names. I don't charge anything except for a few bottles of Diet Coke. It's slow as my mentor taught me that I met when I was young and ran away for staying back a lot. I even worked at the town cemetery but I was fired for having a license on April Fool's Day.



Most of my life I learn that I am simple, even on the road where I got an education meeting people going to different churches, not doing anything to get into trouble. I find that I like carving even if it is just carving names and after I am done I give it to them. I tell them I won't paint it, they will, whatever color they like and anyway we all have our favorite colors and it'll be beautiful, I was taught that.

Jesus besides being a carpenter, he was a carver among men. Men can change slowly with understanding along with love. Like a woodcarver loving as his work comes into shape he gets into like it that he loves it where he wants it and has to give it to whose name is on it. The giver who is also the maker is a receiver when he gives the gift. I sometimes take my carving with me, to look at, to see what needs to be done. I learn from my mistakes as much like I pray to get better.

It is good to hear and read about Mother Teresa's life and work of a modern saint. I look at her picture and I recall when I was in Peoria, Illinois where some of her order of nuns were. When I saw them sometimes they would be helping people in

a nearby project for the poor near the Worker that was once a rectory. The Catholic Church with it was no longer Catholic but something else. I guess the school had been a school. The Catholic Worker served meals four days and Mother Teresa's order served on two. I worked in the morning with sister Norma in the office of south side of social concerns doing land and cutting grass with two other guys. One day I got a call from Wendy and she asked me if I still wanted to go home to see my mother. I said yeah. She said that I had to go back to Des Moines to get the ticket and that the houses needed you. The Worker is closed so I went home and came back to Des Moines. The end.

2017 Bishop Dingman Peace Award

Catholic Peace Ministry's annual Bishop Dingman Peace Award dinner was held April 1 at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Des Moines. Congratulations to award recipients Barb Hans (posthumous) and Rev. Carmen Lampe-Zeitler, who also gave the keynote address.

This annual fundraiser supports Catholic Peace Ministry's mission of advocacy and education for a world without war. For more information and to get involved in Catholic Peace Ministry's please contact CPM's Director, Erika McCroskey at catholicpeaceministry@gmail.com



THANK YOU!

Thank yous to our friends at the Des Moines Intentional Eucharist Community (DMIEC) for donating their Christmas Eve collection towards the purchase of a new used passenger van for the community. We combined DMIEC's \$2,500 donation with another \$2,500 from the Dec. annual v.p. beg letter donations towards the purchase of a new used passenger van to replace our old dieing passenger van. We called my old friend Pete Leone to help us find a new old passenger van with the \$5,000. This time Pete went to my cousin Bobby Mauro's used car lot and we bought the van pictured at cost from Bobby for the community. Blessings to all involved!

Michael Stark R.I.P.

By Aaron Jorgensen-Briggs

Our community was deeply saddened by the loss of Michael “Mikey” Stark this February. Mikey had been a guest at the Worker going on 10 years. According to his brother Charlie, Mikey loved life, loved being around the people at the Worker, playing cribbage or just hanging out. Charlie recalls one special occasion when he and Mikey and their mother were at the Worker and William Petsche made balloon animals for their nephew.

We held a memorial service for Mikey at Bishop Dingman House on February 10. Many of Charlie and Mikey’s family members were present, along with Catholic Workers and other longtime guests who were friends with Mikey. We shared memories of Mikey, music, and Frank led us through a traditional memorial liturgy. It was a moving experience for all present, lifting up our joy at the many memories we have of Mikey, and our grief at his loss. He will be missed by all.



New Kid on the Block

By Aaron Jones

As the new guy, where to begin? Invited by my dear and persistent friend Colyn, I moved into the Des Moines Catholic Worker in November of last year as a live-in volunteer. Every community (neighborhood, workplace, family, etc.) of course has its own culture: values, lingo, and unwritten rules. A living organism, it carries a history of triumphs and defeats in a way that transcends the lives of individual members. I’ve been wrestling with how to navigate the transition well and make the most of my short time here at the Worker as I’ve been accepted into the Peace Corps and leave for Guatemala in September. My conclusion? Listen.

For six years I lived and worked in the urban core of Kansas City, serving the poor in the contexts of social work and ministry. One thing I was looking forward to about living at the Worker was taking the posture of learner, absorbing its ethos and being willing to reevaluate how I see the world and relearn what I thought I knew about how to love people and seek justice in the context of community. I’ll consider my time here a success if I’m able to integrate its values into my own so even after I move out of the attic at Bishop Dingman house, I’ll be able to embody what I’ve received.

What has listening looked like so far? Reading *via pacis* and Dorothy Day. Participating in a weekly liturgy led by Frank. Sharing meals with guests and my housemates. And seeking to be fully present in conversations with folks here about protests and exploits, relational joy and heartbreak, road trips and spiritual pilgrimage, political ideologies and conspiracy theories, homelessness and addiction and prison and doubt and faith ...

Maybe listening could be thought of as a Work of Mercy, with Jesus saying, “When I was lonely, you listened to me.”

The highlight so far of my time here was a wake held in the dining room of Dingman for a long-time guest Mikey. We’d never met, but I know his brother and others close to him.



As people shared stories and prayed, sang, and wept together, I was shown a glimpse into the deep bonds that have been forged in this community. It’s a privilege to be welcomed here and be written into a small chapter of the Des Moines

Catholic Worker’s story. The fun’s not just here though! There are amazing folks and stories everywhere, “for those who have ears to hear ...”

Becoming: My Journey from Volunteer to Community Member

By Joe Mounsey

It is such a funny thing. Those of us who are/were Catholic-identified and who were taught by religious women (read: nuns or “the good Sisters”) were and perhaps still are fascinated by a certain mystique. I mean, what does their hair look like under that white stuff? In a certain sense, I have become aware of a certain wondering about what it is like to belong to the Catholic Worker community. Let me shine some light.

It is true that I had been a volunteer at the DMCW for quite some time before the idea of becoming a community member even entered my mind. Gee, I wish I could say that I had a “vocation,” that I was “called” to be a Catholic Worker, but that would not be true. In my case it was quite different.

I would come here on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, often after working 8 or 9 hours at my job, where I would stand on my feet. I was often exhausted when I walked through the door at Dingman House but I really liked working the serving line, trading repartee with the guests, listening to stories and basking in some of the camaraderie that developed over time.

There was one nagging thing though. Here I am a black man and there were no black volunteers, never mind community members. It seemed odd to me. I spoke about it often and it never occurred to me to do anything other than complain and piss and moan and bemoan the fact. This went on for over a year during which I was a more than less faithful regular volunteer.

So, how is it then that I decided to try and become a full time community member? Trite and hackneyed as it might seem, it simply was a “shit or get off the pot” moment. Piss and moan as I might, to be the difference was up to me. No black community members? Ok, then become one yourself.

Now, any of you who know anything about vocations know that there are no cosmic voices, no divine revelations

no mystical experiences. There is only the moment when the circumstances of your life conspire to lead you from one place to another. And really, that is what happened with me. The racist homophobic supervisor under whose abusive rule I had been working for more than a year became more than I wanted to deal with and having arrived at the retirement age of 62 I thought, “I am out of here! Take this job and shove it!” And so it was.

But that’s not all it was. There was THE PROCESS. What is “the process?” Well, that is the way that stuff gets done or not done around here. For folks wanting to become community members it has a resonance similar to that of becoming a member of a religious order. There is a discernment period, when someone comes to live at the CW and both they and we get to see what that might look like for a longer term. Then there is a vote and a person can become an intern for six months. Both of these steps are important in their own way and both have their little things in them. It really is all about mutual discernment. I am in the intern stage.

What I want to say though is you know how some people are always trying to “find themselves?” Well, as a man in my majority I am way beyond that. Still, I have to say that approaching and arriving at retirement age was not without some very relevant questions, among them: How, Joseph, do you see yourself in five years?

I can’t tell you that. But what I can tell you is that barring any whatever, I have committed to this period of internship. After that, I will go year by year, but I have to say that this time at the Des Moines Catholic Worker with these very different-from-me very awesome people and personalities had already made an indelible mark on my being. This journey, this experience, this path has no relation to anything else in this world and as such has an incalculable value for me personally. And as such, it’s worth ... well, come and volunteer for a day and see for yourself. For some things, there are just not adequate words.



Summer Internship at the DMCW!

Our last summer internship was a smashing success and the Des Moines Catholic Worker is planning to offer another summer internship for 2017! Interns will be immersed in the day-to-day life of the worker focused on hospitality, community and activism. Learn more about the Catholic Worker movement and spend your summer with a great crew of interesting and eccentric folks. Interns will be offered a free place to stay June-ish through August-ish depending on your summer needs. Interested in learning more, contact us at dmcatholicworker@gmail.com.



2016 Des Moines Catholic Worker summer interns on the front porch at Berrigan House.

DMCW Community Update

By Frank Cordaro

Any DMCW community update is really a snapshot of an always-changing scene. So here is an “in words” community group picture, from house to house, from person to person:

The Bishop Dingman House (1310 7th St)

The longest standing occupant is Gil Landolt. Gil is our full-time, live-in volunteer, keeper of the community’s petty cash stash and fearless leader of our Des Moines Bill Basinger chapter of Veterans for Peace. Gil continues to roll with us and do a lot of one-on-one stuff for our guests.

Aaron Jones is still with us for now. Aaron recently got word that he has been accepted into the Peace Corps to work in Guatemala this fall. He will be leaving us in August. Called “new Aaron” or “Aaron the shorter” or “Aaron the Red” for his red hair, this Aaron has been a great presence for our community. He has a kind and generous spirit, is not afraid of work, and enjoys being around our guests.

Next is Joe Mounsey, our newest want-to-be DMCWer. Joe is a black, gay, queen from Queens. Joe is also Sr. Freida Peoples of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and has been for 35 years. SPI is an activist group of gay men, straight men and womyn who raise money for community projects. They began by focusing on HIV/AIDS activism. Joe loves to cook and do hospitality! He has taken on the responsibility of doing the begging for our immediate hospitality needs from a standing list of “go-to people” we have collected. If you would like your name on that list, Joe would be the guy to talk to.

William Petsche is nearing the end of a six-month sabbatical, somewhere in a warmer climate no doubt.

Finally, our newest live-in volunteer, Sarah Dyer. Sarah met Jess during the Iowa Utilities Board fast against the Dakota Access pipeline this fall. She moved into Dingman House in February, and is now in her 30-day discernment period. We look forward to getting to know Sarah as the month progresses.

The Rachel Corrie House (1317 8th St)

The RC House continues to be home base for our own “Rachel Corrie” in the Middle East, Julie Brown. Julie is back in Iraqi Kurdistan, now working full time with Christian Peacemaker Teams, ten months a year. We are all so proud of her. She is a badge of honor for our community. Stay safe!

One of the reasons we can afford to have a Julie Brown out of country doing full-time peace work is because we have Aaron Jorgensen-Briggs, Julie’s Occupy Des Moines sidekick and housemate, back home doing the work. Aaron the “Black,” the “Taller,” and/or the “Older” continues to work at Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, edits the via pacis, holds the titles for our Catholic Worker vehicles and serves as our “go-to guy for computer stuff.” Note: we are in great need of help with our DMCW web page. Please contact Aaron if you can help us.

Conor Murphy has recently left the community. He rightly came to his senses and dropped out of Drake University his senior year, realizing he really wants to be a union electrician. Wonderful! The downside of this is that Conor moved back to Minneapolis where a union electrical job exists and his girlfriend lives.

Also leaving the community is Patrick Stall. Despite my best advice, Patrick is graduating from Drake this spring. He is planning a six-month getaway, leaving open whether to return or not. For the record: Congrats! There is a bit of Michael Harrington in Patrick. I’m betting he will return to

us. Stay tuned.

Patrick’s best side is his mom, Melonie Stall. She does a weekly clean and organizes the resource room at Dingman House, a herculean feat of “bringing order to chaos” on a weekly basis! She is also our community bookkeeper and bill payer. The good news is, when Patrick leaves, Melonie will continue!

Chelsea Manning House (1317 8th St)

Filled to the brim with community members and guests, retired DMCWer Norman Searah spends most of these winter months homebound, doing a lot of woodcarving. The cold icy winter temps discourage outdoor adventures ... still, there are often Norman sightings at the local McDonald’s.

Like the TV “Energizer Bunny,” Eddie Bloomer keeps on running, only Ed is not running as fast as he used to. It’s hard on Eddie to give up some of the physical work he used to do. And sometimes we as a community have to remind Eddie at a Sunday meeting that he can’t do as much as he used too. Talk about a hard-headed guy ... Eddie still mops the floors, does the community “Thank You” to supporters, cooks once a week at Dingman House, gets the mail with Gil at the post office and keeps the Berrigan House Library in order.

Annie Patton continues to be a full-time guest and volunteer, living at Manning House. When Dingman House is open, you’ll most likely find Annie serving food. And when Annie is being nice, she has the biggest, warmest smile, greeting all, our own Dingman House hostess.

Al Burney is also in Manning House on the first floor. Al came to us ten years ago from living in a tent on the river. He’s been in and out of our community ever since. A Veteran for Peace, he is now with us for the last time, fighting cancer. End-of-life issues are not far away for Al. The DMCW community is Al’s home now and we are family. Please keep Al and us in your prayers as we make the best of this holy time.

Jayne and her four-year-old son Eshan have found their way to the Worker by way of Great Britain and Sri Lanka. Eshan has brought a lively spirit to the Chelsea Manning House with his love of dinosaurs, Mama Cat and the chickens, who Jayne has been dutifully helping to care for. Jayne also enjoys practicing Kundalini Yoga, which she began studying back in Sri Lanka.

Colyn and Hilary Burbank have the best news of all: they are with child! The baby is expected this June. This changes everything! We are all excited (even Norman after his first reaction) – can’t wait! Given the hospitality the Chelsea Manning House is doing these days, it could claim its own stand-alone Catholic Worker House status with a full range of housing options, from birth to death and everything in between. In large part, this has to do with Colyn and Hilary’s leadership and it’s a testimony to the kind of community they want to have their child born into. They are our Holy Family.

Sadly reporting Bryan Morrissey is leaving us soon. Nothing bad, just sad: like a parent feels when a child leaves home. Bryan came to us four years ago, a 19-year-old kid, right out of the Bruderhof community in New York. In the last four years, we’ve been a part of a total makeover, transformation, coming of age for Bryan from his Bruderhof Christian communal raising into being a member of today’s fast moving “twenty-somethings,” single, working-class, American male shitty culture. As a member of the community that helped birth you into this god-awful mainline USA scene, I pray we did our best. Bryan will be missed for more than his good back and the many the community jobs he leaves for us to fill. He will be missed for the kind heart and generous spirit in which he served both our guests and our community.

Rev. Bob Cook House for Prison Abolition (1433 9th St)

Our newest DMCW house is just a few months old We have the core community members in place to organize an inside, prisoner-based abolition and advocacy movement. Stay tuned, more to come, much more.

Phil Berrigan House (713 Indian Ave)

Rev. Bob Cook, the eldest in the community at 72, my best friend and housemate, never one to act his age, signed on as pastor to two small churches in and near Vale, IA. Bob loves it! It also gives him a new group of folks to beg for his “Legacy of Lights” effort in El Salvador. It also keeps him in Vale most of the time. Which has worked out well, since the Berrigan House basement blowout, our basement has been a very cold place to sleep.

My partner and love of my live, Jessica Reznicek, recently teamed up with Ruby Montoya, of Mississippi Stand fame on a road trip to Memphis, TN, for arrests, jail and release and then on to the protest in Washington DC for Trump’s inaugural weekend. Ruby is our newest Berrigan House housemate. She is ten years younger than Jess, which is amazing in itself. Although I am frequently amazed these days both for the good and the “Trump.”

Clearly, there is a lot going on in this DMCW community. And there is a lot going on for me in my post-65 life too. All of it, I embrace with gratitude these days.

In that same spirit, I am grateful to announce we have begun weekly community liturgies at the Phil Berrigan House. Every Wednesday at 3 p.m. So far it’s been mostly an “in-house” thing, voluntary, very informal, with a scrumptious meal at Dingman House immediately after, prepared by Joe!

Celebrating a weekly liturgy at the Berrigan House fills a big spiritual hole in my life. It is like the “icing on the cake” in what my former SJ spiritual director once told me about my life: “You live a charmed life Frank, with at least 200 guardian angels working full time” on my behalf. How cool is that?



Fr. Jack Kissling R.I.P.

By Frank Cordaro

I just wrote a check out for \$18,500 to Midwest Basement for rebuilding the Berrigan House northwest corner basement foundation walls. The plumbing on the first-floor bathroom froze, cracked, thawed, froze again and then “blew up” a wall in the basement, a building emergency. And the money we used to pay for this emergency came from a \$25,000 donation Fr. Jack Kissling gave to me the day before he died this past December in Dubuque, IA. Just like Fr. Jack to have my back and be there to help the DMCW solve yet another emergency or crisis in our 40-year run.

The below text comes from a parish bulletin letter I wrote about Fr. Jack and Fr. Bob Beck April 2002 entitled “My Emmaus Story: An encounter with Christ”:

“My father, George, died Easter Sunday morning, April 6, 1969. He had a fatal heart attack. It was my senior year at Dowling High School, a boy’s school in Des Moines, Iowa. My dad was the athletic director for my school. I loved and admired my father more than anyone in the world. His death shattered my world.

The following fall I attended the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) in Cedar Falls, Iowa on a football scholarship. After twelve years of Catholic education and being brought up in a very close and insulated, Italian-American family and community, I looked forward to getting out of Des Moines, away from my familiar surroundings. UNI was the place where I could question and test all my beliefs, especially my Catholic faith. I spent four years at UNI (1969-1973). These were great years to be on a college campus, at the height of a counter culture, questioning authority, anti-war, and anti-establishment era.

During this time I met and got to know two priests who would become lifelong friends. They helped me discern the important matters of faith and vocation to the priesthood. Both were campus ministers at St. Stephens Student Center at UNI.

Fr. Jack Kissling was the older of the two. Jack was the pastor at St. Stephens. A veteran campus minister of many years, his gifts lie with his pastoral skills. He is a great listener and reader



Frank and Jack, November 2005.

of hearts. He believes that to be truly and fully human is to be truly and fully Christ-like. A great preacher, he preached at my first Mass. He gave me the first book I ever read on the Catholic Worker movement, Richard Miller’s A Harsh and Dreadful Love. It changed my life forever.

The thing I admire most about Jack is that he is the same person on the altar that he is off the altar. He has served as a role model for me as to what a good priest is like. Now retired, he lives in Wisconsin. I last saw him in the courtroom on March 6, ever a friend, ever a support.

In the deepest sense, both of these good men offered me

hospitality into their lives. They accept me for who I am and affirm me in my struggles and journey. My encounters with these two good priests have helped me recognize Christ in myself, in the people around me, in the poor and the oppressed, in the struggle for peace and justice, and in the priesthood, I share with them.”

Thank you, Fr. Jack: my mentor, friend, confessor and “class act!” And for having my back and being there for the DMCW for all our 40 years ... and then some.

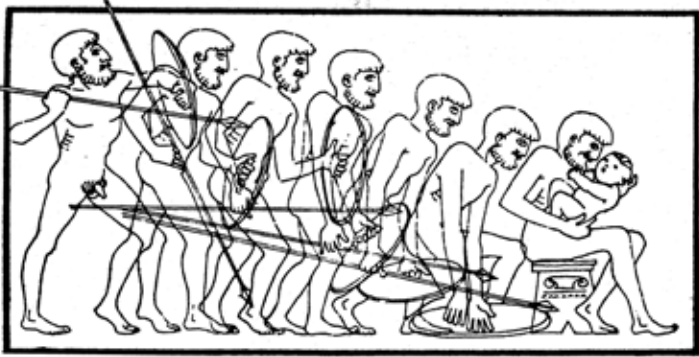
Bob Renfro R.I.P.

By Frank Cordaro

Got word of Bob Renfro’s death this fall. Bob was a DMC- Wer in the early years. This is what i wrote about Bob in the Aug-Sept 1980 *via pacis*:

“Bob Renfro dropped by briefly to give us a few dollars for the houses and to say hello. Bob spent some time with us after he got out of the army as a Conscientious Objector (CO). I will never forget the time Bob had to wrestle a woman guest to the ground as she was attempting to stab her husband with a kitchen knife after the man smashed her in the mouth. It goes to show you that being a CO does not mean being passive in the face of violence!”

Bob and his wife Mirtha were among our longtime supporters, sending us regular donations through the years. Bob had a gentle spirit and his journey through the military into declaring himself a CW and getting out of the military was a journey he was called to make. I’m just grateful the DMCW was there to help him along the way.



2017 Midwest CW Faith and Resistance Retreat

Dates: May 5-8

Site: Su Casa Catholic Worker

Hosted by Su Casa, Emmaus House and LetUsBreathe Collective

This year, the #LetUsBreathe Collective partners with Su Casa Catholic Worker and Emmaus House to facilitate the annual Midwest Catholic Worker Faith & Resistance Retreat, Beyond Resistance. The #LetUsBreathe Collective is a Chicago-based alliance of artists and activists remixing the art of protest to oppose state violence and envision new systems to replace the violent, crumbling systems we’re struggling in today. From May 5-8th 2017, the Collective invites Midwest Catholic Worker communities to Breathing Room – its arts, healing, and orga-

nizing hub on the Su Casa campus on Chicago’s Southside, for a weekend of moving Beyond Resistance and toward constructing healthier relationships, communities, and movements.

For more info contact:
Su Casa Catholic Worker
5045 S Laflin St, Chicago, IL 60609
Phone: (773) 376-9263
<http://www.sucasacw.org/>

If you were racially profiled or mistreated by the Des Moines Police Department, Iowa CCI has created a hotline to call when something unjust happens to you.

Call 515.650.3956 or fill out an intake form: tinyurl.com/dsmpdmisconduct.

A CCI organizer will then get back in touch with you to discuss what happened and next steps for justice.

Bridget Fagan-Reidburn
Community Organizer
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
515.255.0800 (office)
515.707.1970 (cell)
bridget@iowacci.org
www.iowacci.org



A spectre is haunting Iowa: the spectre of socialism.

Part of a growing socialist movement across the country, the Central Iowa Democratic Socialists of America was formed in the first months of this year and has seen its membership doubling at every meeting. An activist organization aimed at changing Iowans’ interpretations of socialism and using nonviolent tactics to push for egalitarian policy changes, the Central Iowa DSA has already taken part in a number of local protests. We acted as marshals in the January Pro-Refugee March, interrupted the House Committee hearing on an anti-immigrant bill, spoke out at a hearing against legislation that would lower wages for working Iowans, and have had members present at virtually every demonstration that has taken place in Des Moines in 2017.

Our numbers are growing quickly, and we invite anyone and everyone interested in building socialism in Iowa to attend our Statewide Conference on April 22nd in Des Moines. Emails can be sent to our Co-Chairs Joe at joseph.ellerbroek@gmail.com or Caroline at caroline.nell.schoonover@gmail.com for additional details about the conference, our biweekly meetings, and upcoming demonstrations.

A socialist future is budding in Iowa.

Come join the party!



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APRIL 2017

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VOLUME 41, NO. 1

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Prayers . . . without them, nothing happens.

VOLUNTEERS:

Monthly meal providers.
Individuals and work crews
for hospitality (serving
food, cleanup), cleaning and
general inside and outside
maintenance . . . without
them, we burn out.

FOOD:

Salted Butter, Sugar, Coffee, Creamer, Salt, Pepper, Milk, Olive Oil, Fruit, Vegetables, Meat and Fish, Cheese, Juice (sugar free), Fresh Garlic, Salad Dressing, Soups and Stews (both canned and fresh). Leftovers from weddings, funerals and other social gatherings. . . .

HEALTH AND HYGIENE:

Feminine Hygiene Items, Candles, Ibuprofen, Multi-

vitamins, Antibiotic Ointment, Band-Aids, Lip Balm.

TOILETRIES:

Razors, Deodorant, Shaving Cream, Shampoo, Conditioner, Lotion, Soap, Toothpaste. (Small sizes preferred for handout . . .) Toothbrushes and Toilet Paper.

NEEDED CLOTHING:

Underwear, Socks, T-shirts, Sweatshirts, Hoodies, Coats, Work Pants. (All Sizes—especially big . . .) Sleeping Bags, Blankets, Pillows.

HOUSEHOLD

SUPPLIES:

Silverware, Dishes, Bleach, Laundry Detergent, Environmentally-Friendly Dish Soap, Murphy's Oil Soap, Pinesol,

Trash Bags, Brooms, Rugs, Candles, Energy-Efficient Light Bulbs, Aluminum Foil, Plastic Wrap, Sandwich and Freezer Bags, Bath Towels.

HOUSE REPAIRS:

With four old houses, there are plenty of projects large and small. We invite do-it-yourselfers—individuals or groups—with skills in carpentry, plumbing, painting, electrical, etc. to come in, look over our housing needs, and choose a project. Bring your own tools if possible.

LIBRARY:

Peace and Justice books for the Berrigan House Library.

\$CASH MONEY\$:

Cash donations are essential to pay our property taxes, utilities, repair and maintenance of property, upkeep and gas for two vans, purchase of needed supplies, our community gardening and for the continued publication and mailing of the *via pacis*, a good 20% of our annual expenses.

DMCW WEBSITE

For up to date news & info on the community, the Rachel Corrie Project, Berrigan House and Occupy the World Food Prize visit the DMCW web page: www.dmcatholicworker.org/.



Frank Cordaro, Des Moines Catholic Workers and friends disrupted Trump's rally in Des Moines on Dec. 8, 2016. Story on p. 5.

Uncomfortable
p. 1

Interview with
Reverend Billy
p. 3

2017 Occupy the
World Food Prize
Trial
p. 4

DMCW Pipeline
Resistance
p. 5

DMCW Disrupts
Trump
p. 5

Faces of the DMCW
p. 6

Barb Hans R.I.P.
p. 8

Michael Stark R.I.P.
p. 9

DMCW Community
Update
p. 10

Fr. Jack Kissling
R.I.P.
p. 11